

## GARLIC EAR DROPS AND EAR INFECTIONS

Ear infections are one of the most common reasons for children to visit the doctor prior to entering school. Most (well over 50%) of ear infections are caused by viruses. The routine use of antibiotics to treat ear infections during the last 30 years has led to the development of many bacteria which are resistant to many of the antibiotics available. In addition, antibiotics may have side effects (in addition to possible allergic reactions) and can lead to the development of yeast infections. Traditional medicine has always looked at ear infections as something which needed antibiotics treatment. Alternative medicine, however, looks at the situation and considers why are some children “bacteria friendly”?

Several factors may contribute to causing a child to be “bacteria-friendly”. (1)Exposure to more than four other children at the same time has been shown to increase the likelihood of getting infected. (2)Consumption of fast food and it’s empty (mainly sugar and simple carbohydrates) calories can produce a sugar loaded body, sugar being the favorite food of germs. (3)In certain children, consumption of allergenic foods (cow’s milk most commonly, but also wheat) can be related to increased congestion and more chance of getting infected.

Each parent can do their best to make their child not “bacteria-friendly”, but often it seems that our children still get frequent ear infections. In this particular situation garlic ear drops may prove to be useful. For centuries, garlic has been know to have anti-bacterial as well as anti-fungal and anti-parasitic properties. Garlic is available in olive and other oils to be used as ear drops (health food stores). Mullein oil, which is in many of the common preparations has three properties which may be beneficial. It has anti-viral action, it increases the lymphatic circulation and it works against inflammation. Garlic ear drops can be used in a preventative fashion, either once or twice a day. It is important to massage the ear canal and lobe to insure the drops reach the bottom of the ear canal. The drops are also useful to soften ear wax, which makes removal easier when examination of the ear is necessary.

### PRECAUTIONS:

- (1) The drops should not be used in young infants with ear infection unless the child has been examined in a doctor’s office
- (2) Use of the drops in any infant with fever is not recommended.
- (3) A last precaution: garlic ear drops should not be used in any child with ear drum perforation or ventilatory tubes.

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